

or *bhavanam*, while the man in authority dwells in an *idam*,³⁴²
and the Raja in a *kovilakam* or *kottaram*. A separate name⁵⁶⁴
for each *tarawad* or family is peculiar to this coast.

There are some superstitious beliefs entertained by the Na-³⁴²
yars as well as other high caste-men, in the selection of the site³⁵¹
for a house and compound, the quality of the soil, the site of the⁸²³
tank, well, cow-shed, and the edifice for the family deity; and^[564]
as an account of these will be of some ethnographic interest,
it is given below:—

The best site should abound with milky trees full of
fruits and flowers; its boundary should be of a quadrangular
form, level and smooth with a sloping declivity towards the
east, producing a hard sound with a stream running from
left to right, of an agreeable odour, fertile, and of an uniform
colour, containing a great quantity of soil, producing water
when dug to the height of a man's arm raised above his head,
and situated in a region of moderate temperature. The
ground possessed of qualities directly opposite to those men-
tioned above is the worst, and that which has a mixed nature
is of the middling quality.

The site to be avoided is described in a special manner as
follows:—That which has the form of a circle, or a semicircle,
or containing three, five or six angles, or resembling a trident
or shaped like the back of a fish, the back of an elephant,
or a turtle, or the face of a cow, etc., situated opposite to any
of the intermediate quarters abounding with human skulls,
stones or worms, ant-hills, bones, slimy earth, decayed wood,
coals, dilapidated wells, subterraneous pits, fragments of tiles,
limestones, ashes, husks of corns and exposed to the wafted
effluvia of curds, oil, honey, dead bodies, and fishes; such a
spot should be avoided on every account.

In regard to colour and taste, ground with smell like that
of ghee and with sweet taste is good for Brahmans; that with^[822]
the colour and smell of blood and with an astringent taste, for^[827]
Kshatriyas; that with yellow colour, smell of boiled rice and
bitter taste, for Vaisyas; and that with dark colour, smell of
toddy and taste of cow-dung, for Sudras.

There is also a test for the selection of a site by lighting^[372]
a lamp in a hole. A hole measuring one cubit in depth,

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351 having been well plastered with mud, a saucer of unbaked
823 earth filled with ghee and four lighted wicks is placed therein,
● 372 for testing the quality of the soil. If the wicks burn brightly
(864) in all four directions, the ground is fit for all the castes,
including Brahmans and other caste-men. If the wicks do
not burn, it will not suit any of the four castes.

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If the house is constructed by a person in the month of

Medam (April-May) he gets disease; in

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Auspicious times for
the construction of house.

Edavam (May-June) he gets money and

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jewel; in Mithunam (June-July) there will

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be death; in Ashad or Karkadakam (July-August) he gets
servants and jewels, but no beasts; in Chingam (August-
September) friendship; in Kanni (September-October) loss of
friends; in Thulam (October-November) death of his wife; in
Vrischigam (November-December) money and crops; in Dhanu
(December-January) he will become a devotee; in Makaram
(January-February) there will be fear from enemies and
thieves, but the builder will know of profits from many direc-
tions; in Kumbham (February-March), danger of fires; in
Meenam (March-April) gold and sons.

The following asterisms are auspicious for commencing a
building:—Aswini, Rohini, Mula, the three Uttaras, Mriga-
sirsha, Swathi, Hasta, Anuradha. All days of the week, except
Sunday and Tuesday, are auspicious. A house should be com-
menced at auspicious moments known as *muhurtas*: Sveda,
Mitra, Mahendra, Gandharva, Rohini and also Raja Sāvitra.
The erection of the pillars should be performed at auspicious
lagnas, moments when the sun and the moon are favourable;
other moments should be avoided.

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Building operations should not be commenced in the

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Inauspicious times.

rainy season nor at the end of the third part
of the dark fortnight, and in the first and

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second part of the bright fortnight. Of the phases of the
moon, the fourth, ninth, and fourteenth should be avoided.
Tuesday is also to be omitted; for working on that day brings
injury or bad luck. Days marked with dangers natural or any
other, arising out of the earth, sky, or heavenly bodies and
other calamities, such as the death of a friend, and those made
ominous by the influence of some planets are considered
inauspicious. A well informed person should do his work
when the moon and the stars are favourable.

241 leads to the tree fruiting within two or three years, instead of four or five. The leaves that fall from the trees in gardens are used as green manure in the paddy fields and coconut gardens. No such thing as growing green manure is known. No wood or forest is near so that the people may bring the leaves.

242 In fact very little manuring takes place in the village. What is actually done in the cultivation of chief crops is to plough the land. Every year much is drawn from the soil, and nothing is returned to it. I have stated above that lands which returned Rs. 1,000 a year do not now return more than Rs. 400 or 500. The two most potent causes for this deterioration are the system of land tenure and the absence of manuring. Perhaps the second is the result of the first, but I think the want of agricultural knowledge is the cause of the want of manuring and scientific cultivation.

372 *Wood and fuel.*—The outer cover of the coconut, the leaves of the same, mango trunks, serve for fuel for the whole village, and they are obtained in plenty, but the price is rising with the general rise of prices.

[313] Wood for implements, building, etc., is obtained from Cochin State, brought in carts drawn by oxen or buffaloes.

342 *The village—Houses.*—For buildings granite is obtained from a place four miles distant, mortar is prepared in the village, mud from the village itself, tiles from different places, the least distant being twenty miles away, for thatch the leaves of the coconut are used, iron things are bought in the bazaar. The houses in the village are all isolated from one another. Every part of the village is inhabited except the paddy fields. However, at the present day traders have a tendency to build their houses as near the road as possible and form streets. The people also have a tendency to live as near the temple as possible, and this has resulted in the formation of four streets, surrounding the temple on all the four sides. These streets form also the bazaar of the village. There are here about 100 houses.

361 The lands adjacent to the temple are occupied by Brahmans and Nayers. Any other place can be occupied by any family. The houses of the low castes, high castes, and of other religions are intermingled. The same garden may be occupied by Muhammadans, Hindus and Christians, and they all live very amicably as if they belonged to one and the same religion.

735 The Pariahs, whose families are only three in number, occupy certain portions of the land of a big landlord. The landlord gives the Pariahs free houses and a certain allowance a month. He thinks it incumbent upon him to protect and maintain them. Their huts, though small, are yet tidy and neat. The allowance that was freely given them has now become a right. They follow certain industries and go to rich men's houses to beg twice a month, and they are given a certain quantity of rice.

342 There are 977 thatched houses, 313 tiled houses, no terraced houses.

286 *Crafts and industries.*—There are seven families of weavers consisting of 39 members, i.e., 14 men, 12 women, 13 children under fifteen years. They have been in the village from times long past. They weave a cloth 1 foot wide, 1½ yards long, and this is used as undercloth. They also at times weave a cloth ¾ or 1

use. No other manure is used. Green manure is not grown but is got from somewhere or other according to circumstances. Varatties are not made. Wood fuel is the only sort used.

Insect pests.—Of these, the most ruinous is the "Chazhi" the terror of the ryot. The chazhi is a small insect of the locust species half an inch long which in millions appear in a few seasons and spread desolation in the paddy fields. Two remedies are current against this pestilence: (1) catching them directly by drawing a cloth (which serves the purpose of a net) attached to two handsticks over the crops and thus killing them; (2) but by far the most efficacious remedy in the estimation of the cultivator is the putting of a talisman in the fields which a local conjurer (Mandravadi) has prepared for him. What chazhi is to paddy "Mahali" is to the arecanut, the only difference being that in this case nothing is believed to be possible to combat the calamity.

Cattle diseases are (1) hoof disease, (2) Koraladappan (swelling in the neck), (3) Thada (mumps), (4) obstruction of urine and dung, (5) sudden epileptic attacks, and other diseases whose causes and cure are unknown to the peasant. Poisoning is sometimes done by Paraiyas of neighbouring desams for the sake of getting the flesh. For beef is eaten only by this lowest class and when cattle die they will be called to remove the carcase. A number of cattle are annually destroyed by tigers also which often venture into the sheds of the peasants. Talismans and offerings to deities are conceived to be the only remedy.

No assistance is obtained from the Agricultural department, nor any from any veterinary doctor.

Wood is commonly got for all uses from private trees; but the forest also supplies sometimes wood for small necessities. For building purposes, wood is purchased—not from any fixed place.

Houses.—The depressed castes have miserable hovels for their houses. A mud wall of five feet height with a ruined roof which can protect the inmate neither from sun nor rain is the order of the day.

Except the palatial family homes of the two jenmis, there are no tiled houses. Terracing is not customary here. All other houses are thatched, and thatching is always of straw.

Most houses have gardens surrounding them, where arecanut trees, plantains, mango trees, jack, etc., are grown. They are joyful to look at.

The maximum distance of cultivated lands from the home of cultivator is one mile.

An acre of land costs from Rs. 200 to Rs. 300. But purchases on jenmi tenure are worth above Rs. 500. But it is impossible to acquire jenmam property except for jenmis; for the jenmis are jealous guardians of their lands and never sell lands once acquired. Direct threatenings and indirect intimidation are used by them to obtain the jenmam right of lands if held by any lesser landowner.

Subsidiary industries.—Neither weaving nor spinning have ever been practised in this desam.

Other crafts—

1. Arrack and jaggery making.
2. Ironsmith.